

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 8 July 2002 from the Permanent Representative of
the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations
addressed to the President of the Security Council**

Acting on instructions from my Government, I have the honour to draw the Security Council's attention to some disturbing developments that are occurring in the provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo under Rwandan occupation.

Exactly one week ago, my Government informed the Council of the seizure of the town of Pweto by troops of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) and the *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie* (RCD/Goma) and the situation prevailing in the town of Kisangani, which is still waiting to be demilitarized in accordance with all the relevant Council resolutions.

A few days ago, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) noted a build-up of Rwandan troops in the town of Moba. It is feared that this concentration may be the prelude to a large-scale attack in Katanga province. According to MONUC, 500 Rwandan soldiers have already been deployed to Moba. There are also reports of heavy military equipment being moved to the area.

Regarding the situation in the highlands, the Council will recall that in its resolution 1417 (2002) of 14 June 2002, the Council expressed grave concern and called on the *de facto* authorities in the regions affected to ensure the protection of civilians and the rule of law.

That was not to be. Quite the contrary, a week ago several hundred RPA soldiers from the town of Uvira set out for the highlands of South Kivu in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; there has been heavy fighting there for some days between RPA and the troops of a "Banyamulenge" commander.

A tragedy and a large-scale humanitarian crisis are currently unfolding in the highlands area. According to a good many non-governmental organizations — one being Eben Ezer Ministry International (EMI), which is based in Uvira and has reported on the catastrophic situation on the Internet — entire families from the highlands are fleeing the violence and RPA helicopter bombings. EMI fears that this war in the highlands may turn into a regional conflict thus further compounding the confusion of the situation.

According to EMI, at the beginning of May, parts of Itombwe community were deserted by their inhabitants due to the heavy fighting taking place in Tulambo and further west, in Nyawivubire and Iranga. The inhabitants were compelled to leave



their village homes and farms and sought refuge in the forests and in neighbouring villages; others were regrouped around Mikenge.

On 18 June 2002, according to EMI, widespread fighting broke out again in various parts of Minembwe (in Masha, Rutigita, Rugabano and Gitavi), Kamombo (in Mungoma, Katongo, Kanogo and Kuwagati) and in Itombwe (at Mikenge, Marundi, Gasiro and Bikuba). Fifty thousand people have been displaced and are in the forests around Lulenge, Kipupu and Luemba. Others have gone to neighbouring communities, such as Kabara, Mizinga, Chakira, Kamombo, Bijombo, Mutambala and Bibogobogo, which are still calm.

The EMI report states that the RPA command at Minembwe forced the entire population of central Minembwe and its surroundings to regroup, and gives an initial list of civilian victims, of persons who have been arrested and tortured following charges or allegations of collaboration, of villages that have been burned and of villages that have been deserted by their inhabitants. It also highlights the suffering of the population concerned and the consequences for their well-being (in terms of health, education, food and so forth) especially the most vulnerable among them, namely women and children.

My Government again asks the Security Council to:

1. Ensure that an end is put to the actions of Rwanda and RCD/Goma in the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
2. Firmly condemn Rwanda and RCD/Goma for pursuing hostilities in the highlands and demand that they permit full and unimpeded access, in full security, to the population of the highlands and provision of humanitarian assistance to that population, especially to women, girls and children.
3. Demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Rwandan troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
4. Convert MONUC's mandate into that of an interposition force; that is essential in order to "secure the Rwandan aggressor" and force him to withdraw immediately from Congolese territory.

My Government invites the Council to take action on this letter and requests that it be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Atoki Ileka
Permanent Representative
Ambassador